

**Press Release
September 30, 2011**



**Embassy of the United States of America
100 Duke & Young Streets, Kingston, Georgetown, Guyana**

U.S. Embassy Goes the Extra Mile for World Heart Day

GEORGETOWN – On Thursday, September 29, 2011, Ambassador D. Brent Hardt, Guyana’s Minister of Health Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, the U.S. Embassy community, and others joined together to promote awareness for the risks and prevention of cardiovascular disease (CVD) in honor of World Heart Day 2011. The group met at 6:00am at the National Park for a brisk, two-lap walk along the Fitness Trail, to promote healthy exercising habits and wore red in solidarity for the occasion. Both Ambassador Hardt and Minister Ramsammy emphasized the seriousness of this health issue and pledged to continue to work together to call attention to this challenge and take actions to reduce risks of non-communicable diseases.

In his remarks, Ambassador Hardt noted that “cardiovascular disease (CDV) affects both developing and developed world alike, and that the United States is doing what it can – inside the U.S. and overseas – to promote healthy lifestyles.” He cited First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” initiative and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) “Million Hearts: Preventing Heart Attacks and Strokes” campaign as examples of what the United States is doing to contribute to a healthier world. He also highlighted Minister Ramsammy’s leadership in bringing greater international focus to the threats posed by non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancers.

Minister Ramsammy pointed out that three years ago Guyana started the “Million Mile Challenge,” a program that “calls the people of Guyana to join and walk a million miles.” He expressed the hope that the Embassy’s World Heart Day Walk “will become a permanent calendar item in Guyana that would attract more and more Guyanese participants to contribute to the million mile challenge.”

World Heart Day offers an opportunity to highlight the importance of elevating Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) up the global health agenda. Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the leading cause of death worldwide, responsible for 17.1 million deaths every year. Eighty-two percent of these deaths occur in the developing world. According to statistics from Guyana’s Health Ministry, chronic NCDs are responsible for almost 50 percent of deaths in the country and they are the number one cause of disability

in the CARICOM region. Cardiovascular disease has a significant economic impact worldwide, and directly impacts patients, families and local communities.

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